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RESIST

May 1982 — 38 Union Square, Somerville, Mass. 02143 — Newsletter #148

a call to resist illegitimate authority

THE FALKLANDS AND THE BOMB

What if Argentina had The Bomb?

What if behind the comic opera exterior of the British armada sailing against Argentina there lurked the possibility of a "nuclear exchange"?

There has never been even a small war between two countries that both possessed nuclear weapons. Yet the time is surely coming closer when two nuclear powers engage in armed conflict. Last year the US government estimated that 12 non-nuclear nations would have the technical capability of detonating a nuclear bomb by 1984. Eleven more, including Argentina, were expected to have that capability by the end of the decade.

If Argentina possessed even a small arsenal of nuclear weapons wouldn't the British fleet be carrying a "deterrent"? And, following the logic of Alexander Haig, would not Argentina leave open the possibility of a first use of tactical nuclear weapons if confronted with overwhelming "conventional" force? Surely members of the Argentine general staff must even now be arguing that Britain would never dare to undertake their rescue expedition if Argentina had a nuclear threat. What lessons are the generals of other potential nuclear powers drawing from this conflict?

Argentina possesses an operating nuclear power plant, and has already produced enough plutonium to make a bomb. The US played a significant early role in Argentina's nuclear energy program, but in recent years has refused to do so because Argentina has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty or agreed to accept safeguards on nuclear fuel. Switzerland and West Germany have stepped in, selling a heavy water plant and a power reactor to Argentina without requiring safeguards. Since 1980 Argentina and Brazil have been cooperating in nuclear energy development, and Argentina in turn has been supplying assistance to the nuclear energy programs of Peru, Paraguay, Chile and other Latin American countries. Several planes in Argentina's air force are capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including more than 100 US A-4 Skyhawks.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 included a pledge by the nuclear powers to conduct serious negotiations to achieve nuclear disarmament. Yet since that time the number of strategic nuclear warheads has tripled. Unless the nuclear powers disarm, other nations will push ahead with nuclear weapons, and the next Falklands expedition won't be so funny.

"FREE ELECTIONS" IN EL SALVADOR

FRANK BRODHEAD

Is "El Salvador" Spanish for "Vietnam"? In spite of Secretary of State Alexander Haig's stout denials, the analogy just won't go away. The US role in the recent elections in El Salvador, with its official State Department observer team, evokes the memory of Vietnam once again. For how can we forget Vietnam's presidential elections of 1967, and the US observer team which judged this exercise in fraud to be "reasonably free and reasonably honest"?

The March 28th elections in El Salvador were called by one US official "the most thoroughly observed elections here and maybe anywhere else." At least twenty countries responded to El Salvador's invitation to send official observer teams to view the balloting. Yet many countries refused El Salvador's invitation, and among those sending observers were Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Guatemala, hardly experts in the practice of fair elections. Much of the international opposition to sending observers, and to the elections themselves, supported the rebels' claims that the elections were inherently unfair. With their leaders marked for death by hit squads based in the army and the right wing parties, El Salvador's revolutionaries claimed that political campaigning would be suicidal for them, and called for a boycott of the elections.

Much of the international criticism of the proposed elections for a constituent assembly was based on the assumption that the army and the Duarte regime would receive a rubber stamp. In an attempt to legitimize the elections in the eyes of the international community and a restive American public, therefore, the State Department announced in early March that they would send an official observer team to monitor the election, thus ensuring its fairness. Led by Senator Nancy Kassebaum of Kansas, the team included two "election experts", Richard Scammon and Howard Penniman, both of whom were part of the observer team sent to South Vietnam in 1967.

Washington's original goal was to legitimate a sweep by Duarte and the Christian Democrats. As the election drew closer, however, the function of the observer team changed. While speculation grew that the right wing

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parties would gain a majority, and that the proto-fascist ARENA party headed by former Maj. Roberto D'Aubuisson might actually gain a plurality, the Reagan administration backpeddled furiously. Appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press" on election day, Haig stressed that the US was not wedded to a particular candidate, but to a set of policies. If the voters elected a constituent assembly dominated by right wing forces, "that's their business." Thus the role of "free and fair elections", monitored by observers from many nations, now became the means by which the Reagan administration could gracefully transfer its support from the alleged center of El Salvador's political spectrum to unabashed supporters of the right.

The process of legitimizing an election is a complex one. But it is not obvious that high class poll watchers from other countries are adequate to the task. Because election experts Scammon and Penniman have now given their stamp of approval to both El Salvador's election and South Vietnam's presidential election of 1967, it might help us to understand the process at work in El Salvador better if we briefly look at South Vietnam's election and the role played in it by the official US observer team.

Free Elections

In early 1967, noted the *Pentagon Papers*, "pre-nomination maneuvering and legitimacy of the Presidential campaign were the subjects which occupied American attention above all else." At that time the US had 385,000 troops in Vietnam, and military strategists were calling for up to 200,000 more. Yet US opinion on the war was polarized, and the unsavory image of the South Vietnam military dictatorship in the US media impeded the Johnson administration's plans for more decisive military action. "Free elections" were the answer to this impasse.

But not too free. Washington feared that the election would split the South Vietnamese military. The military, in turn, feared civilian rule. But all could agree that "neutralists" and "leftists" had to be barred from running as candidates or even voting, and after much maneuvering the military united on Chief of State Thieu and Marshall ("Hitler is my hero") Ky as the winning ticket.

But even within the restrictive conditions set for the elections, the actions of the Thieu-Ky forces led to widespread accusations of fraud, both within South Vietnam and the US. Twelve US Senators charged that the campaign was a "fraud" and a "charade," and President Johnson himself admitted that the elections were "not without blemish."

And so the team of 20 election observers was packed off to Vietnam to monitor the final three days of the campaign, where they had a brief and controlled visit. One member examined ballot boxes to make sure they had a bottom. Another compared the election to those back in Beverly Hills. Prominently featured were the "election experts," one of whom called the election

"reasonably free and reasonably honest," while another pointed out "that irregularities were unlikely since the election law forbade them."

But even as the observer team was reporting to Johnson that the election had been "fair" and "admirable," evidence of widespread fraud was accumulating in South Vietnam. Massive demonstrations were held in Saigon, and a committee of South Vietnam's Assembly declared the election invalid because of a blatant "pattern of fraud." But under pressure from the US embassy and the Thieu-Ky military forces who surrounded the Assembly and invaded its balconies, the Assembly at last voted to confirm the election results. The election runnerup, who campaigned on a peace platform, was jailed.

The function of the monitoring team in Vietnam, as in El Salvador, was to give the elections the appearance of legitimacy. In this they were only momentarily successful. A month later came the demonstration at the Pentagon and the beginning of a militant anti-war movement in the US. And at the end of January, 1968 came the Tet offensive, which turned President Johnson's hopes to dust. While the Reagan administration is congratulating itself over the supposedly high turnout in El Salvador, moreover, it should ponder a turnout of 84% in South Vietnam just four months before Tet. The case of Vietnam, in short, should call into question whether techniques that might be used to ensure free and fair elections in Mayor Daley's Chicago are adequate to measure the will of the people in a country undergoing a revolution.

The real function of El Salvador's closely observed elections may well be a tragic one. When the US sent a team of "independent" observers to legitimize the South Vietnamese election in 1967, it cemented itself forever to the Thieu-Ky regime to which it gave birth. One can now imagine Alexander Haig countering liberal congressional protests against further US support for El Salvador's murderous coalition of right wing thugs with smug appeals to "the process of democracy" and "the will of the Salvadoran people." In doing so, however, he should bear in mind the observations about the 1967 Vietnam election made by George McT. Kahin and John Lewis in their study *The United States in Vietnam*: "With the elections over, President Johnson could now assure the American public that the sacrifices they were making in Vietnam were in support of a 'legitimate,' freely elected government.... The opportunity for effectively broadening the base of the Saigon regime had been lost.... As a consequence, in any future negotiations Washington's options would be narrowly restricted by the predictably rigid viewpoint of a highly unrepresentative South Vietnamese government, whose popular base was so narrow that it could not risk any meaningful compromise without courting its own destruction." (p. 359)

NICARAGUA'S MISKITO PROBLEM

AMANDA CLAIBORNE

According to Alexander Haig, they were being dropped from airplanes. He showed us a picture of burned bodies; only problem was the picture was four years old, a massacre by Somoza's National Guard. The Cuban Missile Crisis expert showed us "before and after" photos of destroyed Miskito villages. Jeane Kirkpatrick told us that the Nicaraguan government was carrying out "a campaign of systematic violence." What do the Sandinistas say?:

The revolutionary government was forced to relocate the riverside communities in more secure areas of the national territory where our Miskito brethren will have, for the first time, access to systematic medical assistance, education, adequate housing, electricity and cultivable land. The relocation has given rise to a ferocious, slanderous campaign of lies mounted by the CIA and the State Department against our revolution. —Sergio Ramirez Mercado (The Nation, 4/3/82)

Well what do we believe: bloodbath or a solicitous government concerned above all with the safety and well-being of the Indians?

The reality is considerably more complicated than the explanation so far advanced by the Sandinistas, but most certainly falls far short of the bloodbath thesis expounded by our State Department (see N. Chomsky and E.S. Herman's *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism* for State Department use of the "nefarious and mythical" bloodbath in Indochina to excuse its own more "constructive" bloodbaths there).

Some History

The Miskitos are the largest Indian group in Nicaragua. Along with the much smaller Sumu and Rama tribes they make up about 10% of the Nicaraguan population. Although a minority of the population as a whole, on Nicaragua's isolated and sparsely populated Atlantic Coast they were, until recently, the majority. Mainly due to its geographic isolation, the Atlantic Coast and its people have historically enjoyed a good deal of autonomy. In the early colonial period, the Spaniards failed to take over the Coast and the Miskitos thus escaped the brutal treatment suffered by Indians elsewhere under the Spanish yoke. While maintaining their subsistence agricultural economy, the Miskitos began trade with British merchants for manufactured goods, from one of which, the musket, they derived their name. At one point the British invented a country of "Mosquitia" and crowned a king who was, incidentally, amenable to making his country a British protectorate. But, according to Theodore Macdonald, an

anthropologist writing in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*:

The Miskito monarchy was always more symbolic than political... For a few Miskitos, the kingdom provided justification for attacks on neighbors or demands for tribute... For the average Miskito, the king mattered little. Although appointed by the Crown, kings could not exercise authority without first consulting with a council of elders, and (Macdonald quotes anthropologist Mary Helms) "even then their directions were followed only if their constituents felt inclined to do so."

Despite the fact that the "kingdom" was primarily a convenient British fiction, shortly after problems first arose between the Sandinistas and the Miskito leadership Macdonald tells us that "the Nicaraguan press claimed that [the Miskitos] were trying to re-establish the 'kingdom'."

In 1894 the Atlantic Coast was incorporated into the rest of Nicaragua and North American imperialism replaced British colonialism. The Miskitos no longer traded food for muskets, but instead worked in US-owned gold and silver mines and grew bananas for export. Macdonald notes that

bananas were produced in Miskito gardens rather than on the extensive land-gobbling plantations which dominated Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. None of these new salaried or contract economic activities precluded regular maintenance of garden plots. Subsistence farming, with the security and economic independence it provided, continued to dominate an economy which was also linked to capitalism and wage labor.

Following World War II, US lumbering operations largely denuded the huge pine forests of the region and forcibly removed Indians from their land. To revive the industry exhausted by the early 1960's, Somoza initiated a massive reforestation project. According to Macdonald

Large tracts of land utilized by the Miskitos were "nationalized" and the Miskito were prohibited from extracting lumber. For the first time, the state and market economies were seen as a threat to the Miskito's claim to land and natural resources. Shortly thereafter, in 1967, local Indian organizations developed along the Coco River. Four years later, Nicaragua's first national Indian organization, Alpromisu, was formed to protect rights to land and natural resources. Violence punctuated Alpromisu's early history. Somoza's *guardia* disrupted meetings and frequently jailed Alpromisu officials. The organization was charged with attempting to encourage separatism, and regionalism, and associating with foreign enemies.

Enter the Sandinistas, as Macdonald continues

In 1979 with the end of a war which, for geographical reasons, incorporated few Miskitos and the installation of a regime which most Indians only partially understood, Miskitos were hesitant to give up their local organization. So they established MISURASATA which means Miskito, Sumu, Rama, and Sandinistas, working together... MISURASATA cautiously embraced the Sandinistas. However, in August 1980, when plans were announced for nationalizing lands on the Atlantic Coast, MISURASATA [which had not been consulted before the announcement]

quickly obtained the Council of State's approval to postpone any nationalization until Indian land claims were settled.

The Miskito's reaction to proposed nationalization of land and resources along the Atlantic Coast was... a response to a perceived threat against their subsistence security and their status as equals in relations with nation states. Prior to 1980 the only serious threat to such freedoms led to the formation of Alpromisu. As MISURASATA worked to assure rights to land and natural resources, its efforts produced familiar accusations of racism, separatism, and rumors of an incipient regional "revolt."

These accusations led to the arrest of 33 leaders of MISURASATA in February of 1981 and to the subsequent exodus of several thousand Miskitos to neighboring Honduras.

Sandinista relations with the Indians were not helped by the initial implementation of the literacy and agrarian reform programs. The literacy campaign was conducted only in Spanish despite the fact that most Miskitos speak English, or Indian languages. The agrarian reform project became a cause for misunderstandings and bitterness too because agrarian reform officials resented the reluctance on the part of the Miskitos to depend on centralized government to supply seeds and markets for their crops. Old arrangements with usurious merchants may not have seemed preferable to outsiders, but at least they were dependable, of no little importance to a subsistence farmer. These problems, however, proved relatively minor. The Sandinistas realized they had made mistakes and MISURASATA officials understood that these mistakes were, as Macdonald notes, "not structural, but rather methodological." However, other more important problems remained to be solved.

Natural Resources

At the heart of the difficulties between the Sandinista government and MISURASATA is the question of natural resources: Who "owns" the Atlantic Coast? The map that MISURASATA prepared to substantiate Indian land claims shows that they claim over 45,000 km² of the Atlantic Coast, more than 38% of Nicaragua's land total. Macdonald believes that MISURASATA is willing to negotiate this percentage and that what is at stake is, as John C. Mohawk wrote in *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, "Sandinista recognition of the existence of Indian nations and landbase, aboriginal rights and the right to an Indian national personality."

These rights the Sandinistas have so far refused to recognize. Mohawk discusses two points contained in a document entitled "Declaration of the Principles of the Sandinista Popular Revolution in Regards to the Indigenous Communities of the Atlantic Coast" issued in Managua on August 12, 1981.

Point 5 states that the government stands ready to recognize Indian land rights to "... the lands where they have lived historically in the communities of the Atlantic Coast, already being in the form of communal (sic) or cooperative

ownership." That wording basically means that, like the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Nicaragua government is willing to recognize that the Indians only have rights within the limits of the villages they occupy, and implies that their rights to territory are not recognized... Were the Sandinista position to be adopted by the US, the Black Hills would be automatically forfeited and the Sioux claim would be limited to the town limits of the villages... All the land in between the villages would be claimed by the US government. Point Five appears on its fact to deny all Miskito rights under any treaties and it totally denies the concept of aboriginal rights... There is no guarantee or even mention of any hunting and fishing rights...

Point 6 states that "the natural resources of our territory are the property of the Nicaraguan people represented by the Revolutionary State..." the rights of the Indians are limited to "... receive a share of the benefits derived from the exploitation of forestry resources... in conformity with national planning."

Were point 6 to be adopted in US law, it would mean that the Navajo and the Lakota and the Pueblo Indians would have no ownership rights to oil, gas, uranium or other mineral resources, and arguably no rights to water, and they would have no power to determine the path of development of those resources.

Conclusion

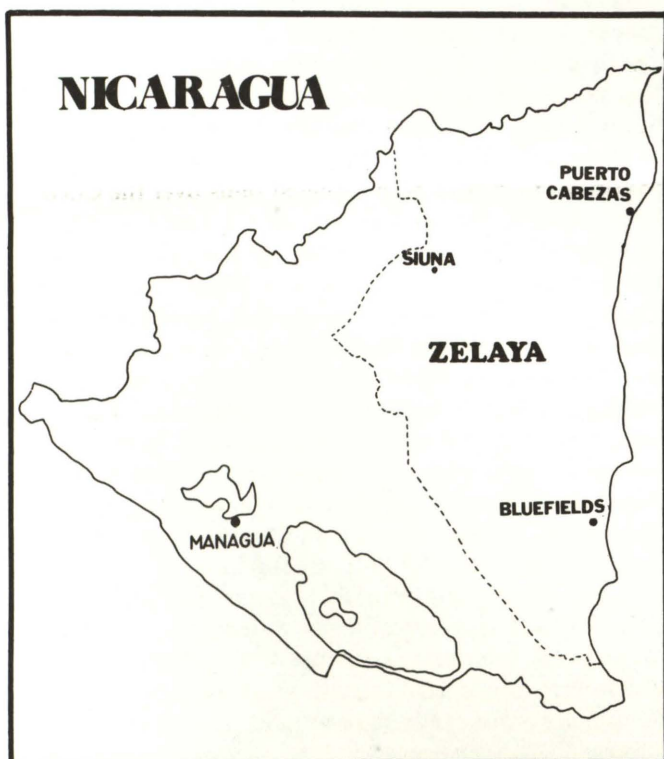
The Sandinistas are between a rock and a hard place, economically, militarily, morally. Economically, they are squeezed by the US refusal to provide economic aid on one side, and Somoza's legacy of debt on the other. Trying to make their economy more self-sufficient while repaying a staggering foreign debt, and simultaneously needing to purchase military hardware to build up the country's defenses is an extremely difficult task, if not an impossible one. The lumber on the lands claimed by MISURASATA represents a source of badly needed export income, and so, without waiting for negotiations, Nicaragua and Mexico have already embarked on a \$56 million joint venture to cut and process lumber from the pine savannahs of the Coast.

On the issue of security, the US is overtly supporting counter-revolutionaries massing in Honduras for an invasion. There have been repeated raids over the Coco River which is the border between the two countries. Undoubtedly part of the reason for the relocation of thousands of Miskitos is just what the Sandinistas say it is: the desire to remove the population from a combat area. It is also a move to deny the *Somocistas* any possible base of support in Indian communities, and to create a demilitarized zone between Honduras and Nicaragua (the likely reason for the Sandinistas' burning of Indian villages after relocations were completed). However, we have to note that, according to a piece by Macdonald in the *New York Times*, "resettlement actually was conceived in 1980 as a means to move Miskitos permanently onto 250 square-meter lots."

We can only agree with Charles R. Hale, a Sandinista official who works on the Atlantic Coast that "(t)he government cannot demonstrate great political flexibility as long as Nicaragua's national sovereignty continues to be in danger." It is also true that some

MISURASATA leaders, whether or not their intentions were originally counter-revolutionary as the Sandinistas have charged are now openly collaborating with *Somocistas* in border raids and radio broadcasts on Radio 15 September which attempt to panic the Indian population. But we have to ask, as Mohawk does, "Is the defense of Indian rights a counter-revolutionary position?... Are we to support Indian people in struggle for their aboriginal rights against puppet regimes like the Somoza government but then abandon them when their rights are threatened by revolutionary governments?"

Obviously the real criminal in all of this is the US government which, by waging economic as well as actual war on the Sandinista government is making the chances for an MISURASATA/Sandinista *rapprochement* ever less likely and less possible. So should we criticize the Sandinista government at all? I believe that we must for three reasons: First, because the Sandinistas are not of one mind on how to deal with the Miskitos. For every official who believes, like the one who spoke with Macdonald, that relocation is not a burden because "these people are just nomads who live in shacks," there are others who are not ignorant of Miskito culture and who have shown themselves willing to negotiate and to learn; Second, because the importance of this issue extends beyond Nicaragua's borders. Indians make up a large percentage of the population of Latin America. In nearby Guatemala, on the brink of its own revolution, and where *latinos* and Indians have only recently joined forces, Indians are the majority of the population. They wait and watch to see how a revolutionary government deals with its "Indian problem." Finally, we must all ask ourselves John Mohawk's question, and answer it.



THE COMING WAR WITH NICARAGUA

JEFF McCONNELL

The next three months will be critical ones for the Nicaraguan people. The respected *Latin American Weekly Report* claims that there are rumors in the Honduran armed forces that some kind of military showdown between Nicaragua and Honduras will occur by July. The *Nation* reported in January that a faction of the Honduran military has accepted the inevitability of a war with Nicaragua. A month earlier an unnamed "senior State Department policymaker" told the *San Francisco Examiner* that the Reagan Administration would have to "face up to a fundamental decision in the next six months: whether to allow Nicaragua to consolidate its Marxist-Leninist regime, which already has become a base for subverting the whole hemisphere, or act to stop it."

In late march, the National Security Council received options papers on possible American actions toward Nicaragua. Decisions made by the NSC in mid-November after receiving the last previous options papers led to grim results. Ronald Reagan signed an executive order on December 1 approving a broad program of covert political and paramilitary actions against Nicaragua. Almost immediately the State Department began a large-scale propaganda campaign against Nicaragua portraying its government as totalitarian and militaristic, bent on dominating Central America, and sold out to Moscow. At the height of this campaign, former National Guardsmen based in Honduras initiated "Operation Red Christmas," a paramilitary operation against Nicaragua in the isolated and politically sensitive Atlantic Coast region. At least sixty Sandinistas were killed. Radio 15 September, operating from ten miles inside Honduras, called on the Miskito Indians of the Atlantic Coast to rise up against the Managua government. The Sandinistas responded by clearing out the border area, temporarily ending the attacks from Honduras.

With good reason, however, the government expects further repetitions. On March 6, the independent *El Nuevo Diario* and the Sandinista paper *Barricada* printed a description of the invasion the Sandinistas fear to be imminent. Diversionary border attacks, according to this account, can be expected all along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border, while the invasion force would land on the Atlantic Coast. Jose Cardenal stated in a recent interview in the Mexican paper *Excelsior* that his anti-Sandinista forces were waiting in the mountainous border region to begin attacks similar to those described in the two Nicaraguan papers. And the December *San Francisco Examiner* interview with US

officials offered a similar scenario. Perhaps coincidentally, the Bay of Pigs invasion was mounted from this area along the Atlantic Coast in 1961.

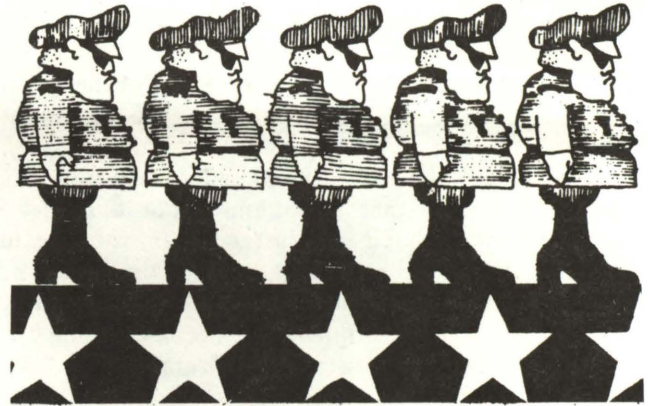
It is for these and many other reasons that Nicaragua sought the help of the UN Security Council in late March and early April. The response of the US was to veto a measure that would have empowered the Secretary-General to investigate Nicaragua's charges that the US was fomenting a military attack from Honduras, charges Jeane Kirkpatrick labeled "ridiculous." Kirkpatrick defended the veto by arguing that the OAS, and not the UN, was the proper forum for discussing such charges. She did not mention the fact that many OAS states had already given behind-the-scenes approval to the US plan to destabilize Nicaragua, nor the fact that several were actively plotting alongside the US.

The US has been working to build Honduras up militarily to carry out these efforts, and promoted the cosmetic elections there in November 1981 that installed civilians but actually left power in the hands of the military. These elections have enabled the Reagan Administration to increase military aid to Honduras and to offer Honduras more economic aid than any other Caribbean Basin nations except El Salvador and Jamaica. To carry this out, the US has increased its embassy staff 40% over the last two years.

In November 1981, at the same time the NSC was approving its campaign against Nicaragua and just before the Honduran elections, the Reagan Administration installed as its new ambassador to Honduras John Negroponte. Negroponte is an experienced diplomat who has had ties with the CIA while serving in Saigon as political officer from 1964 to 1968 and while on the NSC staff during the Chile years, 1970 to 1973. He is among those who envision a possible future regional "gendarme" role for Honduras. Negroponte has overseen recent growth in both the CIA station and the US military mission in Tegucigalpa. Since late 1981, the number of Green Berets and other military advisers in Honduras has increased from 14 to 97. AID has financed millions of dollars of road construction in Honduras since 1980, presumably to make it easier to move the Honduran army throughout the countryside, allocations for such construction increasing substantially since Negroponte's arrival. In addition, the US and Honduras are known to be discussing the Pentagon's plans to build military airfields on a Honduran island in the Gulf of Fonesca off the coast of Nicaragua. This airfield would be used by the US to airlift troops and supplies into the region during a crisis. The head of the Honduran armed forces in fact said in late March that he could foresee the use of US troops in Honduras to defend his country — presumably from Nicaragua or from its own population.

Right now, Honduran armed forces are being used by the US mainly to militarize the border areas with El Salvador and Nicaragua. As the head of the US Southern Command in Panama Lt. Gen. Wallace Nutting said recently, insurrections like that in El Salvador have historically been defeated only "when the international

political borders have been secured." The Hondurans have cooperated extensively with Salvadoran troops along the common border. The Hondurans police refugee camps inside Honduras and have allowed Salvadoran troops into them. Recently, World Vision, a fundamentalist and steadfastly anti-communist relief organization, took over CEDEN, the ecumenical group which has been overseeing refugees in Honduras under UN auspices. When the staff of CEDEN resigned in protest and formed their own organization, the chief of the Honduran military chose the World Vision-controlled CEDEN over the new organization to handle the refugees. World Vision is reported to have had three Honduran intelligence officers on its staff in the past.



The US has consistently refused offers from Nicaragua to help Nicaragua and Honduras set up a joint border patrol to police arms traffic into El Salvador. Instead, the US and Honduras have held joint naval maneuvers in the Gulf of Fonesca the reason being, so says the US, to train the Honduran navy in the interception of arms. But with the indifference shown by the US to the border-patrol proposal as well as the recent report by Raymond Bonner of the *New York Times* that he had been told by Honduran military officers that there was no evidence of overland arms traffic through Honduras, Nicaraguan officials suspect the maneuvers were staged as a provocation to Nicaragua. The inability of the US to produce credible evidence of substantial arms traffic has compounded the suspicion that the arms issue is entirely US propaganda.

On the other hand, Honduran military officers have had a hand in the border incidents between anti-Sandinista Nicaraguan exiles and the Nicaraguan army. Thousands of these exiles operate freely from Honduran territory. Although Honduran officials deny this, they do not permit reporters to travel in the border area. Anti-Sandinista Nicaraguans captured in paramilitary operations have told of involvement by top Honduran officers. In late 1981, after the crash of a Honduran military aircraft, among those discovered on board was Steadman Fagoth, leader of a Miskito Indian faction that has joined former National Guardsmen in attacks on Sandinista troops in the Atlantic Coast region. In late March, there were actually several minor clashes between Nicaraguan and Honduran armed forces.

It is unclear what role US advisers are playing in these events. The Nicaraguan government has called the presence of the 97 advisers "suspicious," but it has produced no direct evidence of US involvement in the border incidents. However, CBS reported in late March that a US Green Beret was approached by a US officer about possible work against Nicaragua. Also, among the options approved in November 1981 were the creation by the CIA of a 500-man paramilitary unit to sabotage vital economic installations inside Nicaragua and CIA cooperation with Argentine efforts at training a 1000-member anti-Sandinista army in Honduras. The *Times* reported in March that Americans are not to be involved directly in these forces although two or three Spanish-speaking CIA officers are to carry out liaison, "sharing intelligence and pointing out targets." However, the CBS report contradicts the *Times* story as does an NBC report that Americans were to be involved directly in the operations.

Some of the duties of the 97 US advisers in Honduras have been disclosed. Negroponte reports that eleven of the advisers are permanently assigned to Honduras and 86 are on temporary duty with "military training teams" (MTTs). In a six-week program that ended in late March, three US sergeants from these MTTs taught precision parachute jumping to seven Hondurans. Advisers told NBC's Brian Ross that such training was "perfect for infiltration." Other MTTs in Honduras include a team to help enlarge the Honduran navy, a group of specialists in airport security, a communications survey team, and a team training Hondurans in "arms interdiction techniques." The communications survey team is working to improve, among other things, the ability of the army to communicate with the army command post at Puerto Lempira, a city where exile groups are also known to be training Miskito refugees from Nicaragua for paramilitary activities. A recent *Newsweek* report asserted that US Green Berets among these MTTs are training 13-year-old boys for combat. Brian Ross reported being told by sources that advisers are also providing weapons to exile groups being trained by Argentine officers near Tegucigalpa.

Reporting in late February from Tegucigalpa, Alan Riding wrote in the *New York Times* that "the local United States mission appears to have established direct contact with Mr. Fagoth and other anti-Sandinista leaders." Nicaraguan exiles confirmed to a Knight-Ridder reporter in Tegucigalpa recently that a "mechanism" had been set up "for contacts between Washington and a committee of Nicaraguan exiles representing diverse points of view." It thus appears that implementation of the N.S.C.-approved plan may have begun.

These same exiles also confirmed that Argentina has been involved in assisting anti-Sandinista groups in Honduras, at least since May 1981. Other press reports assert that Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Chile and Honduras have all been involved in discussions and preparations for operations similar to those approved by the N.S.C. for as long as two years. Yet there have reportedly been differences between the US and Argen-

tina over tactics. Although the Carter Administration during its last months explored the possibility of supporting former Somoza supporters, the Reagan Administration is said to have rejected this option on the advice of CIA officials who stated that these *Somocistas* were too tainted ever to have any future credibility among the Nicaraguan people. The US thus decided to put its weight behind opponents of the Sandinistas with anti-Somoza credentials. The Argentina-trained force, however, is made up largely of Somoza supporters. Full cooperation with Argentina is thus said to be difficult until the pro-Somoza and anti-Somoza opposition groups begin to work together. The anti-Somoza groups, sharing the US concerns, claim they cannot do this, pragmatically or morally.

The US has actually assisted both groups of opponents, however. Pedro Ortega, a wealthy Nicaraguan industrialist in exile, makes regular trips to Miami to recruit other exiles into his Nicaraguan Liberation Army, the group thought to be responsible for most of the casualties along the Honduran border. The recruitment activities of Ortega clearly violate the Neutrality Act, yet neither is he arrested nor is his visa revoked. Similarly, thousands of exiles from the Somoza regime have been permitted to settle in the US. Those not guilty of war crimes are clearly "economic refugees," fleeing the tighter control that the Sandinistas have placed on the Nicaraguan economy. They should be sent back to Nicaragua under the same laws that are said to apply to Haitian refugees. In fact, lawyers for the Haitians discovered a vast case of inequitable application of the law under a discovery request filed in 1980. Many other exiles, however, are war criminals and should, according to the law, be extradited. However, the US has discouraged extradition requests by Nicaragua, granting political asylum to some, and allowing others to remain while their asylum requests are pending. It is this pool of exiles Ortega recruits from.

The other main exile group is the Nicaraguan Democratic Union, or UDN, the group for which the Reagan Administration approved support. The UDN is composed largely of business leaders and their supporters who, although they sided with the Sandinistas during the revolution, quickly became disillusioned once they saw the Sandinistas move in substantive ways to separate politics and money in Nicaragua. The UDN and the non-military bourgeois opponents of the Sandinistas inside Nicaragua have been the principle exploiters of the rhetoric of human rights in order to intimidate the Sandinistas into restoring to financial interests the freedom to control political debate in Nicaragua. In addition to approving support for the paramilitary efforts of the UDN, the Reagan Administration is also supporting, through AID grants and CIA payoffs, efforts by political parties, business organizations and labor unions inside Nicaragua to restore political power into the hands of those the US can do business with.

Jeff McConnell is editing a book on the CIA based on a lecture series given at MIT in January.

GRANTS

MEDIA NETWORK (208 West 13th St., NY, NY 10011)

Fortunately for all of us on the planet, the US disarmament movement is growing by leaps and bounds. In cities and towns all over this country dedicated people have been busy educating their friends and neighbors to the real but preventable threat of nuclear war. An important tool in the education process has been visual media: films, videotapes and slideshows. A recent Resist grant went to the Disarmament Media Project of the Media Network to help them collect, compile, and disseminate information nationally about the use of visual media for grassroots organizing on disarmament, military spending and related issues. The crucial aspect of this project will be the dissemination of whatever material is generated. To this end, Media Network has obtained the sponsorship of national organizations with local chapters including the Coalition for A New Foreign and Military Policy (49 chapters), Mobilization for Survival (130 chapters), American Friends Service Committee and SANE. Other organizations that they plan to contact include the National Council of Churches and Clergy and Laity Concerned.

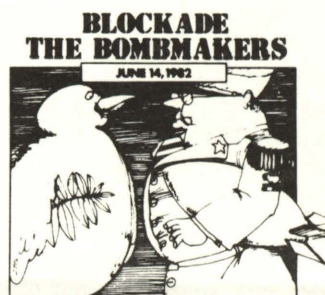
CHE-LUMUMBA SCHOOL (c/o Panua Putnam, Every Woman's Center, Wilder Hall, University of Mass, Amherst, MA 01002).

For over ten years Che-Lumumba has been providing a program of political education and cultural enlightenment for elementary school children from Third World and White working class backgrounds. The school was founded by Third World parents convinced that the American public school system fails to teach children the truth about their histories, the struggles of their people and the contributions of those struggles to building the nation. Parents also felt that schools teach the culture and ideology of the dominant class including racism, sexism, and class exploitation. Che-Lumumba parents believe that the essence of an alternative education must be a multicultural curriculum focusing on the political history and culture of Third World and working class White people. The curriculum has had a different theme each year: Self-Determination, Workers of the World, Coming to America (the immigrant experience), and this year Native Americans. Che-Lumumba's children are studying the lifestyles, histories and struggles of Native Americans as well as their relationship to land and the environment. As part of the program, the children are corresponding with children at The Freedom School of the Mohawk Nation in upstate New York and plan a visit there later this year. Resist's grant provided seed money for a fund-raising project to help the school achieve greater financial self-sufficiency.

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR (PO Box 25592, Chicago, IL 60625).

Most Resist contributors will remember the moving demonstration in the spring of 1971 — Operation Dewey Canyon III — when Vietnam veterans threw back their war medals on the steps of the Capitol. This year, the eleventh anniversary of that demonstration and the fiftieth anniversary of the Bonus March of World War I veterans, VVAW is sponsoring a "limited incursion into Congressland." For four days (May 12-15) Vietnam vets, vets from other eras, friends and supporters plan to demonstrate, rally, march, lobby and learn. Demands that will be raised include those common to all vets ("No VA Cutbacks"); those specific to Vietnam vets ("Test, Treat and Compensate Agent Orange Victims"); and those relating to a broader movement ("No Aid to El Salvador, No War").

VVAW has been in the forefront of the progressive veterans movement since the days of the Vietnam war. They publish a newspaper, *The Veteran*, with recent issues being devoted to Agent Orange, incarcerated veterans, and US intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua. A regular feature of *The Veteran* is "Recollections," an extremely moving column that provides a space for veterans to communicate their experiences of life and death in Indochina. These columns have been collected in a pamphlet of the same name (\$1.50) which is by itself an eloquent, painful argument against war. Resist's grant was to print a descriptive brochure setting forth the demands of the action.



During the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament join the massive march and rally on June 12. Then on June 14 join in a non-violent civil disobedience action [nonviolence training required] to blockade the five major nuclear powers at their Missions to the United Nations:

- United States • Soviet Union
- China • Britain • France

For more information, contact
Civil Disobedience Campaign
 339 Lafayette Street
 New York, N.Y. 10012
 (212) 777-4737